

Message Text

SECRET

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70

ACTION OPR-02

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05 SCS-03 A-01 SCA-01

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O R 120115Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO AMEMBASSY MANILA IMMEDIATE

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 9302

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

S E C R E T PHNOM PENH 2632

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, AEMR, CB, RP

SUBJ: EVACUATION OF FILIPINOS FROM PHNOM PENH

REF: A) MANILA 1823 B) PHNOM PENH 2541

1. EMBOFF OBTAINED FOLLOWING INFORMATION FROM PHILIPPINE AMBASSADOR VIRAY THIS AFTERNOON. SEVERAL DAYS AGO HE ADVISED APPROXIMATELY 170 MEMBERS OF FILIPINO COMMUNITY IN PHNOM PENH THAT THE SITUATION HERE HAD DEVELOPED "SERIOUS BUT NOT CRITICAL PROPORTIONS". BECAUSE OF THIS HE ADVISED THEM TO TAKE "BRIEF VACATIONS" OUT OF THE COUNTRY UNTIL THE SITUATION STABILIZES. HE SAID THAT ONLY ABOUT TEN PERSONS HAVE RESPONDED BY LEAVING. (A SIMILAR ADVISORY LAST YEAR WAS ALSO LARGELY DISREGARDED, THE MAIN REASON APPARENTLY BEING THE SUBSTANTIAL COST OF BEING TEMPORARILY ABROAD AND THE LOSS OF INCOME DURING THE EVACUATION PERIOD.)

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2. AMBASSADOR VIRAY SAID THAT "VERY RECENTLY" HE HAD

REQUESTED HIS GOVERNMENT TO PLACE A MILITARY AIRCRAFT ON STAND-BY. HE DID NOT, AS INDICATED IN PAR 1, REF A, INDICATE THAT HE HAD ASKED THAT A PHILIPPINE AIR FORCE C-130 BE SENT HERE IMMEDIATELY TO EVACUATE ALL FILIPINOS.

3. AMBASSADOR VIRAY TOLD EMBOFF THAT HIS EMBASSY IS NOW COMPRISED OF A TOTAL OF TWENTY-FIVE PERSONS, INCLUDING OFFICIAL STAFF AND THEIR DEPENDENTS. IN THE EVENT THE SECURITY SITUATION WERE TO DETERIORATE IN THE DAYS AHEAD, HE WOULD PLAN TO SEND MOST OF THIS GROUP OUT OF THE COUNTRY. HE, HIS WIFE, AND TWO OR THREE OFFICIAL STAFF WOULD PLAN TO REMAIN. WHEN ASKED WHAT HE PLANNED TO DO WITH THIS FINAL GROUP IN THE EVENT OF A CRITICAL DETERIORATION IN THE SITUATION, AMBASSADOR VIRAY DID NOT APPEAR TO HAVE DEVELOPED A CLEAR PLAN.

4. YOU MAY PROVIDE MELCHOR THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTIONS CONTAINED PARA TWO, REF A:

A. AT AMBASSADOR DEAN'S REQUEST, THREE OUT OF THE SEVEN DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS IN PHNOM PENH WHO ARE INCLUDED IN OUR EVACUATION PLAN WILL HAVE SENT OUT MOST OF THE DEPENDENTS OF THEIR OFFICIAL STAFF BY FEBRUARY 15. (WE ARE REPEATING TO MANILA REF B WHICH EXPLAINS OUR DECISION TO SEND OUT THE SIX WIVES OF OFFICERS OF THIS EMBASSY.)

B. MOST OF THESE AFTERMENTIONED FOREIGN DIPLOMATIC MISSION DEPENDENTS WILL FLY TO BANGKOK ON OUR REGULARLY-SCHEDULED THREE-TIMES WEEKLY USAID-CHARTERED AIRCRAFT.

C. ONLY ONE COMMERCIAL AIRLINE, AIR CAMBODGE, CONTINUES TO OPERATE OUT OF CAMBODIA. EVEN THESE FLIGHTS, HOWEVER, ARE SUBJECT TO OCCASIONAL CANCELLATION OR DELAY DUE TO ROCKET ATTACKS DIRECTED AGAINST POCHENTONG AIRFIELD. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THESE FLIGHTS ARE USUALLY FULLY BOOKED.

D. THE PHILIPPINE EMBASSY IS NOT AND HAS NEVER, REPEAT NEVER, BEEN INCLUDED IN THIS EMBASSY'S EVACUATION PLAN. THIS UNDERSTANDING WAS FULLY CONFIRMED IN THIS AFTER-
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NOON'S DISCUSSION WITH AMBASSADOR VIRAY. WE HAVE NEVER BEEN APPROACHED IN ANY WAY DURING THE PAST EIGHTEEN MONTHS FOR ASSISTANCE IN EVACUATING FILIPINO NATIONALS OF ANY CATEGORY. (WE OF COURSE DO ASSUME COMPLETE RESPONSIBILITY FOR EVACUATING ALL FILIPINO THIRD-COUNTRY NATIONALS WHO ARE EMPLOYED IN CAMBODIA BY AMERICAN COMPANIES WHO ARE ON CONTRACT WITH THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT. EMBOFF RECONFIRMED THIS SPECIAL COMMITMENT

WITH AMBASSADOR VIRAY THIS AFTERNOON.)

E. SEE REF B FOR INFORMATION ABOUT CURRENT STATUS OF
OUR EVACUATION PLAN.

5. WE ARE AT SOME LOSS TO ADVISE YOU AS TO OUTLINES OF
A CONSTRUCTIVE RESPONSE FROM MELCHOR TO AMBASSADOR VIRAY.
THE FILIPINO COMMUNITY HERE IS A FAIRLY LARGE ONE. WE
CAN ONLY SUGGEST THAT MELCHOR SHOULD INSTRUCT
VIRAY TO GO OUT TO THEM AGAIN AND MAKE IT QUITE CLEAR
THAT THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT CANNOT ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY
FOR THEIR EVACUATION IF, AFTER A CERTAIN POINT, THEY DIS-
REGARD ITS WARNINGS. YOU SHOULD, OF COURSE, REASSURE
MELCHOR THAT WE WILL BE IN CLOSE CONTINUING CONTACT
WITH AMBASSADOR VIRAY WITH A VIEW TO SHARING WITH HIM
OUR APPRECIATION OF ALL ASPECTS OF THE CURRENT
AND FUTURE SECURITY SITUATION HERE. OUR GENERAL RE-
ACTION IS THAT IT WOULD, IN FACT, BE ADVISABLE TO KEEP A
PHILIPPINE MILITARY AIRCRAFT ON STAND-BY ALERT FOR THE
TIME BEING.
DEAN

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